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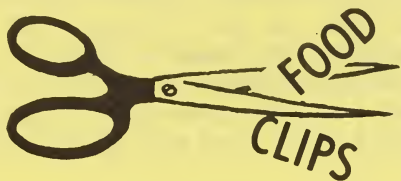
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Food and Home Notes

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In This Issue:

- 1 Research on Soap
- 2 / Food Preservation, V
- 3 -- Home Canning (2)
- 4 Monthly Special Feature:
Cost of Food--Updated

Fresh vegetables are generally highest in quality and lowest in price when in season -- your best guide as to when to buy.

* * *

Want to add a new taste treat to that old family favorite, creamed onions? Next time, mix in some finely chopped salted peanuts as you make the cream sauce. Sprinkle more of the chopped peanuts on top of the dish as you serve. Onions are abundant now -- in contrast to the shortages of last spring.

* * *

Very little lean meat is found in "pig's feet." They are mostly bones and tendons which are sold either pickled or fresh.

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Check the label to see if your meat should be "cooked before eating" or whether it is "fully cooked." Don't assume that it is fully cooked! Remember, pork products must be cooked thoroughly (including the center of the meat) to prevent trichinosis.

USDA RESEARCH

---On "Modified" Soap---

Hard water--in many parts of the country--presents a difficult problem for most washable fabrics. Heavy deposits of calcium and magnesium soap (scum) forms on the fibers of the materials. This problem has long plagued the "hard-water" areas.

A new soap--a modified soap has been developed by the Agricultural Research Service at the U.S. Department of Agriculture laboratories in Philadelphia, Pa. The soap is made from constantly replenishable agricultural raw materials -- is safe and biodegradable and eliminates the hard-water problem. It contains a chemical called a lime-soap dispersing agent which prevents curd formation.

This new soap, in addition to being a good discovery, may lessen the nation's dependence on detergents, most of which are made from petroleum and contain phosphates.

FOOD PRESERVATION SERIES

In canning, the term "food processing" is used. In this case "food processing" refers to time and temperature. It is not simply temperature that kills spoilage microorganisms--bacteria, yeast and mold--but heat in a combination of a certain minimum temperature and specified time.

--- on acid foods

Acid foods may be safely processed easily by immersing the sealed containers in boiling water which has remained at 212°F, the temperature necessary. The time specified for the process depends on the contents and how tightly the contents are packed--as well as the size of the container.

Low-acid foods must be considered somewhat differently. Not all low-acid foods are contaminated with the botulism bacteria, but, since we have no way of knowing which are or are not, all low acid foods should be processed with enough heat to kill the botulism spore. This means that the process must be carried out in a pressure cooker where higher temperatures up to 240° at 10 pounds per square inch are used.

--- processing in the oven

A word --- DON'T. Oven canning is dangerous, warn specialists at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Jars may explode. Moreover, the temperature of the food in jars during oven processing does not get high enough to insure destruction of spoilage bacteria in vegetables.

The reasons "why not to" are many, but should be understood. Although oven temperature may be 450° F. and the pressure canner using steam only reaches 250° F., oven canning poses two problems. First, the rate of heating with air as in the oven is much slower than heating with steam so times for processing would be much longer. Second, it's impossible to get uniform heating of all the jars placed in the oven unless forced air circulation were used. Then, the seals on glass containers are not designed to withstand the pressure that develops inside the container unless it is counterbalanced by pressure outside the container. If the seal on the containers used cannot be relied on to hold the internal pressure that develops, then we cannot be sure of reaching the specified temperature inside the container.

Other reasons not to consider oven canning include the fact that jars also may explode during cooling periods; liquid from the jars may escape into the dry oven air; seals may break after cooling.

USDA does not have recommendations for the use of the microwave oven in canning at this time. Therefore, USDA does not recommend the use of microwave ovens for canning.

—Food Safety

--- on preservatives in canning

Some preservatives in home canning are optional: sugar or other natural sweeteners in fruits, to hold flavor; small amounts of plain table salt for seasoning; small amounts of ascorbic acid (vitamin C) as an anti-oxidant to prevent the darkening or discoloration. Others should not be used -- some canning powders and chemical preservatives are harmful.



--- canned without sugar? salt?

Fruits may be safely canned at home without using sugar because sugar is used mainly for retention of shape and for enhancing flavor. All fruits and fruit juices can be successfully canned without sugar. Sugar does not prevent spoilage; processing time is the same for unsweetened fruit as for sweetened. Jams, jellies, pickles and tomato sauce can be made by substituting artificial sweeteners for sugar. Vegetables may be canned without salt, too.

--- hot pack or cold pack?

Hot pack refers to....heating fruits in sirup, in water, or steam or juice before packing into the jar.

Cold pack means putting cold raw fruits into jars and covering with boiling-hot sirup, juice, or water (used for cherries and berries, except strawberries). Cold pack is not recommended for low-acid foods.

Remember, there are no short cuts for canning...avoid all "trick" methods. Adequate heat treatment is the only safe procedure.

Watch for the signs of food spoilage. Bulging can ends, jar lids, or rings or a leak, spurting liquid, an off odor, or mold. Remember, it's possible for canned vegetables or meats to contain the poison carrying botulism -- a serious food poisoning -- without showing signs of spoilage. If there is any doubt---dispose of the food so that it will not be eaten by humans or animals.

COST OF FOOD AT HOME FOR A WEEK (March)

	<u>Low-Cost Plan</u>	<u>Moderate-Cost Plan</u>	<u>Liberal Plan</u>
Families			
Young couple.....	\$26.00	\$32.60	\$39.50
Elderly couple.....	21.10	27.10	32.20
Family of 4 with preschool children.....	37.40	47.10	56.70
Family of 4 with elementary school children.....	43.70	55.10	66.90
Individuals*			
Women			
20-34 years.....	10.90	13.70	16.30
35-54 years.....	10.40	13.20	15.70
55 years and over.....	8.80	11.30	13.40
Men			
20-34 years.....	12.70	15.90	19.60
35-54 years.....	11.70	14.80	17.80
55 years and over.....	10.40	13.30	15.90
Children			
1-2 years.....	6.30	7.90	9.40
3-5 years.....	7.50	9.60	11.40
6-8 years.....	9.30	11.70	14.50
9-11 years.....	10.80	13.80	16.50
Girls 12-19 years.....	11.70	14.80	17.60
Boys 12-19 years.....	13.60	17.50	20.70

* Food cost for any family can be figured by totaling costs shown in table for individuals of sex and age of various members of the family as follows:

- o For those eating all meals at home (or carrying some meals from home), use amounts shown.
- o For those eating some meals out, deduct 5 percent from amount in table for each meal not eaten at home. Thus, for a person eating lunch out 5 days a week, subtract 25 percent or one-fourth the cost shown.
- o For guests, include for each meal eaten, 5 percent of amount shown in table for the proper age group.

Next, adjust the total figure if more or fewer than four people generally eat at the family table. Costs shown are for individuals in 4-person families. Adjustment is necessary because larger families tend to buy and use foods more economically than smaller ones. Thus, for a 1-person family, add 20 percent; 2 persons, add 10 percent; 3, add 5 percent; 4, use as is; 5, subtract 5 percent; 6 or more, subtract 10 percent.

COMMENTS AND INQUIRIES to:

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